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# Orpheus in Thrace

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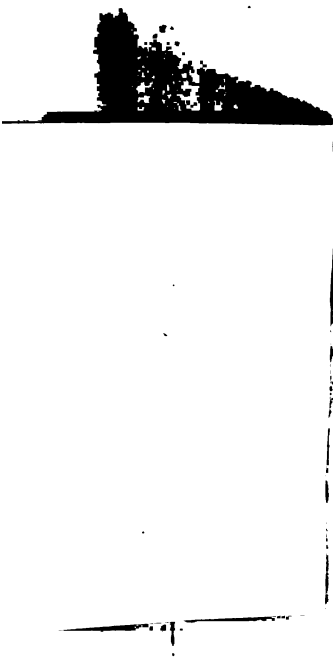
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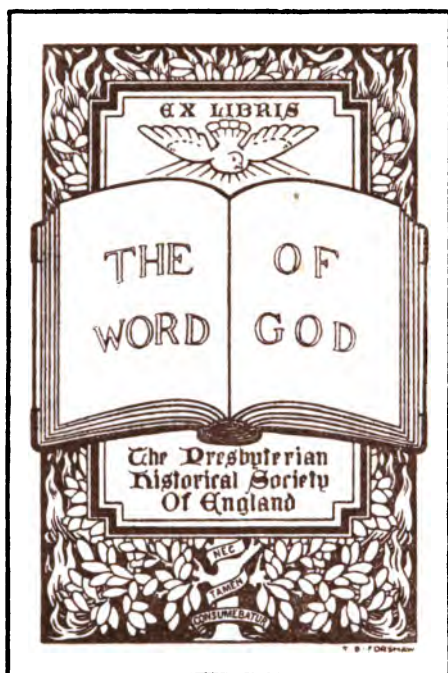
## Errata

- page 74 Flash  
86 Burn  
86 deer, - trip  
40 "Acheronian"  
page 98 "cause" "call"  
" 118 skull-cap"  
134 "art"  
92 "are" 15  
101 . omitted

# ORPHEUS IN THRACE

AND OTHER POEMS





ORPHEUS IN  
THRACE AND  
OTHER POEMS: By  
the late JOHN B. LEICESTER  
WARREN, LORD DE TABLEY

*Edinburgh,  
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**LOAN STACK**

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D479  
orp

*TO THE FRIENDS  
WHOSE ENCOURAGEMENT AND SYMPATHY  
INSPIRED THESE LAST VERSES  
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED.*

*E. L. W.*

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## ORPHEUS IN THRACE.

ALL breathing men have trouble of their day.  
Fate and the gods abhor prosperity  
For us who live the wasting of an hour.  
Yet I, that Orpheus, whose sole craft is song,  
The mortal son of the immortal muse,  
Claim to have vanquished all competitors ;  
In endless desolation held supreme,  
I bear the palm of sorrow's thorny road.  
Man's common grief to my imperial pain  
Seems like a puny gnat that pricks the skin,  
Beside a python crushing in his coils  
The very bones to pulp, a broken heap ;  
Seems as a ripple to a cataract,  
Seems as a dew-bead to a planet sphere.

B

I



ORPHEUS IN THRACE

O miserable bard, whose grinding woes  
Drive him to wander with an aching heart  
Thro' mountain fields and Thracian solitudes,  
Loathing his fellow men, a life apart ;  
Scorn in my soul against man's shallow race,  
In trivial jars consuming narrow days,  
Wailing and laughter, spite and vanities,  
And as a robe they are folded and put away.

From the first quivering dawn-point in the  
gray  
To the last purple foot-step in the cloud  
Upon the road where Phœbus went to rest,  
Thro' the long day and all its wasteful hours,  
I wander like a phantom of myself.  
Pale, hollow-eyed, immersed in utter gloom,  
I peal my piteous passion to the crags,  
And the pines hear me and the torrent-voice  
Wails in with mine, concordant to my woe.

ORPHEUS IN THRACE

One theme the dawn, one theme the sunset  
brings,

The fierce noon blazing on the mountain  
walls

Explains no other sorrow ; the fair moon  
Floated in many a star and fleeting cloud  
Burns the same story on the brow of heaven.

One master-chord of grief is tyrannous,  
And, without pity stifling, sweeps aside  
The feeble notes which whisper nascent  
hope,

Soon turns the cadence back to grim despair;  
Until the lyre and its seven brother strings  
Sound each a vocal tear, distinct in woe :  
As when the urns of heaven come pouring  
down

Against the full-leaved heaving forest-sheets,  
And the woods drip with quick perpetual  
throb,

ORPHEUS IN THRACE

Mocking the semblance and the sound of  
tears

And seem responsive to my streaming eyes.  
My faltering hand in many a broken pause,  
My heaving breast in many a gasping sob,  
Divulge a loss, which tears have never  
sounded,

Deep-welling from the fountains of my life,  
An agony which words are dumb to tell,  
Which only music, sovereign to express  
The supreme desolation of despair,  
Unveils by gleam and glimpse in ruinous  
deeps,

A mind that crumbles like a wasted crag  
Into a midnight of unfathomed chasm,  
Ragged, abrupt, another Taenarus.  
Why should I wither slowly, inch by inch?  
Where is this laggard Death? No stranger he,  
Familiar is his face, and day by day

I have burnt incense in his gloomy shrine.  
 He comes to those who prosper and fare well.  
 I am not worth the raising of his hand ;  
 The young, the good, the lovely are his prey.

I am become as some pale, rotten weed  
 Beside a stagnant marsh, whose matted floors  
 Reek up polluted vapours ; leaf by leaf  
 I drop to dust, and round my sapless roots  
 The horror of a black and staining mire  
 Festers, and tho' the attributes of life  
 Survive, I perish piecemeal in my wane,  
 As one long dead, forgotten out of mind  
 Among the dusty brethren of the grave.  
 I am withered from my old identity,  
 O ! I am changed, for as no man believes  
 That this sere leaf which in October hangs  
 Can be the same with May's redundant shoot,  
 Can this same Orpheus of the grand attempt

ORPHEUS IN THRACE

Be one with this weak palsied nerveless thing  
Stumbling along the granite glens of Thrace,  
Perplexed with aimless fear and girded round  
With walls of apprehension, woebegone  
And trembling at the movements of the trees,  
When the wind gently stirs the stagnant  
noon?

How can I be that greatly daring bard,  
Armed with his lyre and armoured with his  
love,

Who went among the torments of the dead,  
Who saw calm-eyed, with visage well  
composed,

Dire emanations, shapes intensely foul,  
Worse than the dream of fever brings the  
brain,

Horrors, abortions, lemures, vampires, ghosts?  
I faced them all to save my well-beloved,  
To bring her back to nature, whom the snake

ORPHEUS IN THRACE

Plucked down to Orcus. There stern Hades  
sat,

His shaggy brow ridged in reluctant frown  
At my request, glooming an angry nay,  
Until I made the mighty Queen of Hell  
Weep like a maiden, and the fluttering ghosts,  
Who had forgot emotion could recall  
Some faded touches of their human heart,—  
Love, Ire, and Sorrow that build up a soul.  
So music won my wish. They gave her back,  
And thro' the roads of torment we returned  
Up to the light. Conditions Orcus made,  
Easy conditions surely. Woe is me!  
And she behind me, trembling like a child,  
Came closely, as a timid infant clings  
Fast to the mother's skirt, whose homeward  
steps  
Lie o'er a darkling waste as eve shuts in.  
And all went well till on the edge of light,

In sight of golden safety and love secured,  
 I faltered ; agony it seemed to wait  
 A moment longer ; such a flood of love  
 Conquered my soul to see once more the light  
 Beam in those dearest eyes, to hear her  
 breathe,

To catch one glimmer of her glancing robes.  
 Fool to forego restraint, ere I had won  
 All with my patience, fool to falter then,  
 For mighty Love took part against himself,  
 And his intensity became a spear  
 To pierce his own true heart with pangs of  
 doom ;

And in an instant I had turned and gazed.  
 Then from the deeps of Orcus far below  
 Came up the muttered thunder, and the abyss  
 Trembled at my transgression. All was lost.  
 She with a shriek cast upwards piteous arms  
 And down the gloomy chasm slipt slowly back,

And as she faded dim in veils of gloom  
 To me were spread her ineffectual hands  
 For aidance from the wide engulfing void,  
 Fruitlessly spread, and as she faded, came  
 These piteous accents, and her voice was  
 changed

To thin and strange as might a shadow speak;  
 "O love, what madness slays thy heart and  
 mine?

I am torn from thee by relentless fate  
 And Death is heavy on my drowsy eyes  
 Which see thee and which love thee while  
 they may

An instant, ere I fleet into the shades,  
 Veiled in a mantle of eternal night  
 And filmy staining of the wasteful grave.  
 And now farewell, my love, for thine no more  
 Towards thee I reach my ineffectual hands  
 Fruitlessly reached as slowly I recede,



Such drowsy sleep involves my hapless form.  
 Loving, I pass to that dim land, where Love  
 Comes not, nor any comfortable beam ;  
 Thy bride no more : oblivion plucks me down.  
 Hail ! Love, my weak hand wafts thee long  
     farewell,  
 Touching the lips that never shall be thine."

Then as a misty wreath of waterish haze  
 Melts in the sombre background of the woods  
 That make a midnight with their crowded  
     shafts

Where pines uprear a labyrinth of spears,—  
 She spake and faded piteous from my view ;  
 A whisper and a rustle and she was gone,  
 As some sere leaf drifts down the chasm dire,  
 And gone for aye, irrevocably gone.  
 Then all my love and all my perilous road  
 Seemed like a fruitless beating of the air,

## ORPHEUS IN THRACE

And all my daring, all my lyric skill  
Issued in this supreme calamity.  
Ah, wasted toil, and valour thrown away !  
What could I do there at the cavern mouth,  
But pore upon its depths in blank despair ?  
No second ingress Taenarus allows.  
The gloomy ferry-man, propitious once,  
Refuses stern a second living freight.  
What penalty could Hades not impose  
If once again I fought my furious way  
Back to the fiery throne ?

Hope faded fast,  
And all my soul grew sick with giant grief ;  
Yet months I loitered near the pass of pain,  
Sustaining life on roots and bramble fruit.  
Hopeless at last, dead to the heart and dazed,  
I wandered northwards to the Thracian wolds,  
By gentle streams, deep vales and spacious  
hills,

ORPHEUS IN THRACE

A region fair tilled by an evil race,  
Who live as dogs live brutish wrangling  
days,  
And pasture beeves, and shear a patch of  
maize,  
And crush a grape sour-hearted into wine,  
Herdsmen and thieves when chance arrives  
to steal.  
And their fierce matrons, they who rear this  
race,  
The very dregs and lees of womanhood,  
Are Mænads stained by wind and tanned by  
glare,  
Crude faces furrowed by a hundred storms,  
And harsher than the panic-screeching jay  
Peals out each shrewish voice from field to  
field,  
With hideous laughters, foul, abominable.  
And these dare offer to me their fierce love,

ORPHEUS IN THRACE

And, when repulsed with loathing, they  
depart

With clamour and wild menace of revenge,  
And when the grape-god's festal day arrives,  
They indulge their thirsty humour, calling  
this

Religion, and inflamed with new made wine  
Bestial they rush with howlings o'er the hills  
Maddened and fierce as tigers cub-bereaved.  
Surely a wise god this, one worshipped well,  
To tear and ruin, yell and soak and fling  
Their limbs abroad and rend their scanty  
robes!

The inspiration of a noble cult!  
The holy priest of Bacchus hounds them on  
With twinkling eye and shining hairless pate,  
A bull-faced stunt Silenus spider-bellied,  
Whose girdle-clasps scarce meet across his  
paunch,

ORPHEUS IN THRACE

His exhortations what the Mænads rage.  
He names them pious daughters ripe for  
heaven,

He tells them, if they only drink enough,  
Like Ariadne they will turn to stars  
And beam their radiance on the nightly  
world :

That the red ruin by a god inspired  
Out-weighs a cold and barren rectitude.  
On me the special fury of their scorn  
Descends, because my solitary days  
Insult their love and flout their vinous charms.  
My grief disturbs their chorus to the grape,  
Their orgies are a loathing to my soul ;  
For all which slights they one day vow  
revenge.

The vengeance of a maddened Mænad takes  
A hundred forms : I know not which will  
come.

ORPHEUS IN THRACE

Perhaps to hale me like a tethered steer  
In drunk procession to a drunken god,  
And slay me with a sacrificial hymn.  
A grievous ending ; yet my life has sunk  
Lately to such a fathomless despair,  
That I should welcome even the flamen's  
knife

To balm the edge of my calamity.  
If death be slumber, I shall surely dream  
That I am walking with Eurydice.  
If death be wakeful, and I know it is,  
I shall arise and joyous greet her there,  
And shade and shadow we will mix and  
greet.

*August 11th, 1895.*

## NAPOLEON THE GREAT.

*While the happy fields repose  
In a border of wild rose,  
And the meadow mantle glows  
Like a flower,*

*As I pace this woodland glade  
Visions come and visions fade  
Of the wars Napoleon made  
And his power.*

### France.

How from mean estate he came,  
On the splendid plumes of Fame  
To the Sun's imperial flame  
Soaring proud,

NAPOLÉON THE GREAT

As a champion of romance,  
He has breathed his soul on France,  
And she started from her trance  
And her shroud.

Soon the Consul's laurels fade  
Into Cæsar's purple shade ;  
No such lord of battle blade  
Came before.

With his foot on Fortune's wheel  
Europe whimpers at his heel,  
By the right of blood and steel  
Emperor.

Scale o'er Alps and bridge the Rhine,  
Burst thy barriers, Apennine !  
Shall such puny bounds confine  
His renown ?



NAPOLEON THE GREAT

He has conquered south and east,  
Kings attend him at his feast,  
Of his Marshals yet the least  
Wears a crown.

But the Ocean curbs his sail,  
Tho' by land his sword prevail :  
" Brine-ward let his glory fail ! "  
Fate decrees.

Useless fleets he builds in sight  
Of the Forts on Dover's height,  
Hated Albion rides in might  
On the seas.

Sullen in his icy lair,  
Bides the yet unvanquished Bear,  
And he mocks at Cæsar's chair,  
Sown with bees.

## NAPOLEON THE GREAT

### INTERLUDE.

*Here are lambs on frolic feet,  
Here are miles of ripening wheat,  
And the ploughboy carols sweet  
To his team.*

*Safe inside our narrow seas,  
Who invades our English peace ?  
But the foes of Britain cease  
Like a dream.*

### MOSCOW.

Let the roofs of Moscow burn,  
Till the Czar of Moscow learn  
Sheeted winter cannot turn  
Back his fate.

Onward, on, the legions go ;  
Shall Napoleon dread the snow ?  
Let the chidden Cossack know  
We are great.

## NAPOLEON THE GREAT

Nay, but see the eagles there  
Slow retreating in despair,  
See the General, white with care,  
Ride before.

Rime is on that rider bold,  
Rime is on the eagles' gold,  
Rime upon the standard's fold,  
Crisp and hoar.

### INTERLUDE.

*Miles of purple orchard fruit  
Weigh the bough and strew the root.  
From the mere one ringdove's lute  
Wakes the shore.*

*Sheep bells tinkle far behind,  
Like hushed echoes on the wind,  
Breathing peace to human kind  
Evermore.*

## Waterloo.

Then there rise upon my view  
Those grey flats of Waterloo,  
Where the red men met the blue  
Like a wall ;

Legions flashing in the sun,  
Sabre clash, and vollied gun,  
Till the world our Wellesley won  
From the Gaul.

Then the clarions gave their peal,  
Then the wrestling squadrons reel,  
Silent in their ranks of steel  
Soldiers bled.

Then, as clouds of gathering night,  
Blucher's morions massed the height,  
And the tyrant at the sight  
Turned and fled.

NAPOLEON THE GREAT

Over faces of the slain,  
Through the cannon-cumbered plain,  
Ah, he never turned again  
To his dead !

All his retinue of kings  
Melt on panic-stricken wings,  
While his dying trooper sings  
Marseillaise.

Mighty Captain, King of Rome,  
Mourn thine eagles stamped in loam,  
Rifled barn and ruined home,  
Ricks ablaze.

Fly by sacked and burning farms,  
Fly by riddled windmills' arms,  
In the nightmare and alarms,  
Of thy pride.

NAPOLEON THE GREAT

By the endless poplar lines,  
By the trampled corn and vines,  
In the crash of great designs  
Let him ride.

INTERLUDE.

*See, the hawkmoths in the wheat  
Kiss the roses' faces sweet,  
At the violet's sapphire feet,  
Kneeling low.*

*Hark ! the thirsty crickets cheep  
To the poppy, queen of sleep,  
Till the field mice peer and peep,  
Soft as snow.*

St. Helena.

He's thy captive, England, now !  
Ah ! undiadem his brow,  
Chain him to thy galley prow  
Like a thief.

NAPOLÉON THE GREAT

Let thy warship cleave its way  
To the far meridian day,  
Let the wild Atlantic spray  
Guard the chief.

Soon I see the barren rock  
Where the island breakers shock.  
Here with arms that interlock  
He looks down ;

As a broken eagle torn  
On the whirlwind of the morn,  
Comes to die and dies in scorn  
With a frown ;

As that Titan, with the smart  
Of the vulture at his heart,  
Feels his limbs already part  
Of the tomb,•

NAPOLÉON THE GREAT

Feels the slow sepulchral stain,  
Inch by inch, on grinding pain,  
March against his heart and brain,  
In the gloom,

Scanned by grim and jealous foes,  
Keen to chronicle his woes,  
And to watch him as he goes  
To his doom.

INTERLUDE.

*Merry school-girls thro' the woods  
Scamper in their russet hoods,  
Happy mothers watch their broods  
In the nest.*

*Comes a robin without dread,  
Piping on a cart-house shed,  
Where a rowan ripens, red  
As his breast.*



## The Invalides.

Last I see the pageant slow,  
And all France in weeds of woe  
Lays the laurel, bending low  
To his car.

Now in death's imperial state  
Once again this King is great  
And beyond the reach of Fate  
And of war.

So he sleeps upon his bed,  
With the great enduring dead,  
And the cannon round his head  
Peal him home ;

As he heard them many a day  
In his riding-coat of gray,  
When the battle rolled away  
Like the foam.

NAPOLÉON THE GREAT

CONCLUSION,

*Thus I sat to meditate  
And to muse upon the fate  
Of Napoleon the Great  
And his peers ;*

*Till I thought I heard the drum,  
And the cannon seemed to come  
With a long mysterious hum  
Thro' the years.*

## A PARTING.

Cold in the wintry gorges hangs the snow,  
Keen through the withered woods the north  
winds blow,  
One rift of sun-ray falls with frigid beam,  
And crisping ice makes sad the wimpling  
stream,  
While deep in drifts the devious roads are  
dumb  
Ere day has come.

Thy lips are colder than a wintry morn,  
And as hate so is love that turns to scorn.  
Time in the wreck of ages rolling by  
Must teach the pretty puny god to die,  
And for our parting, since our lips are dumb,  
The day has come.

A PARTING

O wasted love, whose bright and rosebud  
bloom

Must turn to dusty chambers of the tomb!

O ruined rose, that made the morning red,  
Pass to the pallid precinct of the dead,  
And for our parting, since our lips are dumb,  
The end has come.

The sun is low ; the night draws in apace ;  
And tear-like clouds hang on the sunset face.  
Grief has pulled down our golden days, my  
lass,

Like a green windfall in the orchard grass.  
Of all love's banquet have we kept a crumb,  
Now the end has come ?

Wasted and worn that passion must expire,  
Which swept at sunrise like a sudden fire  
Across the whitened crest of happy waves.  
Now lonely in a labyrinth of graves,

A PARTING

His footsteps foiled, his spirit bound and  
numb,  
Gray Love sits dumb.

Shall we bewail in ashes, O my sweet,  
How lame our youth where once he journeyed  
fleet?  
Shall we lament this love that comes and  
goes?  
'Tis but the petal of a bramble-rose.  
Of all our kisses sure the end has come.  
Love's lute be dumb!

## THE STOIC'S CREED.

Hoard not up the yellow dross,  
Spurn the deadly discs of gold ;  
Let the miser turn and toss  
Sleepless on his wealth untold.

Life requires a crust of bread,  
A bowl of wine, a dish of meat.  
Wilt thou toil thyself half dead  
To pile a heap thou canst not eat ?

Who would break his rest to guard  
What a thief can steal away ?  
Will thy ducats bring reward  
To dim eyes or hair of gray ?

THE STOIC'S CREED

Of thy hoard what lust abides,  
When to end thy selfish greed  
Comes the bony knight who rides  
Dark upon his steel-white steed?

Will thy money-bags avail,  
Speak him soft and gain reprieve?  
Then thy gold will melt and fail  
As Danaid's water thro' the sieve.

Will thy bullion beam as bright  
To palsied grasp and horny eye,  
In the horror of the night,  
When Cræsus hears the doom to die?

Honest work will bring enough ;  
Work, and have no further heed.  
Life is made of sterling stuff,  
Love expands a nobler creed.

THE STOIC'S CREED

Purple fleeces scare repose :

Slumber loves the cabin door :

To sleep exempt from care and foes,—

'Tis the treasure of the poor.

Fate with blameless mind defy ;

Rest and Labour, wisely blent,

Bring with happy usury

The increase of a fair content.



## THE LAMENT OF ECHO.

Sole in the vale, along the shelving crags  
By lone reverberant quarries and deep scaurs,  
Where the full river, coiling like a snake,  
In loop and reach reverted on itself,  
With long meandering desultory march,  
Pushes its languid current towards the sea  
And trifles with the flowers upon its rim,  
Loosestrife and kex and spear grass, cliffs  
    above  
Rearing their cumbrous woods o'er dark  
    ravines ;  
There along shelf and gallery I pass  
With foot as light as the dew-spider's thread,  
And listen, listen, listen, ah ! for whom ?  
I lean my ear against the rifted side

THE LAMENT OF ECHO

Of granite chasms, porches of Acheron.  
My feet fear not the crumbling gray defile,  
They clamber where the mountain breaks in  
    shards  
And tumbles all in weathered fragments down.  
I wind, light-footed as the mountain goat,  
By slippery tracks and sheep-cotes tenantless,  
Once walled, now broken and ruined long ago,  
Built by the herdsmen of the dawn, whose dust  
Is scattered on the hills : primeval folds,  
Whereat once bleated Sire Deucalion's sheep,  
I thread them like the shadow of a dream.  
I search the clefts and crannies of the rocks,  
I search and yet I find not, woe is me !  
Hera has laid this curse upon my lips,  
That I am dumb until one speaks to me.  
I, Echo most forlorn and shadowy nymph,  
Abiding in my whispering solitudes,  
Lovelorn and broken with stern Hera's hate,

THE LAMENT OF ECHO

Consume my barren prime, which bears no bud.  
I pass, the glitter of a half-seen robe,  
I pass, the whisper of a half-heard voice,  
An ineffectual cuckoo of the rocks,  
Here, there, close to, then half a vale away.  
I pine and wane in my decrepitude,  
Sick with a wasting flame that dries my soul,  
Sick with the haunting face of the hill-boy,  
Whom I pursue with yearning infinite,  
And wither for his beauty and his grace.  
He is beyond the hyacinth and rose  
In loveliness : such clustered ringlets hang  
Around his brow ambrosial : such a flush  
Mantles the flower-like burnish of his cheek.  
O my Narcissus, never to be mine !  
Immeasurably barriered from my love  
By the half childish vengeance of this god,  
Who plays with wreck and ruin, as a boy  
Delights to break the plaything of an hour.

## THE LAMENT OF ECHO

And me the slow death of long love-despair  
Wastes with insidious poison to a shade,  
And he disdains me and I pine disdained ;  
For to the solstice beam of my desire  
He is cold and wintry, as the turbid wave,  
Wherein his sire Cephissus, king of floods,  
Holds oozy state and sun-sequestered rule,  
Under his palace roof of floating weeds.  
Me such a net of vengeance Hera weaves,  
And Fate has made Narcissus this award,  
Lovely she made him with a lavish hand,  
Loveless she made him with an iron heart.  
His eyes are keen to track the hunted roe,  
But to the colour of all love are blind.  
Love may not whisper in his dullard ear,  
And kisses wander from his perfect lips  
In an eternal exile far aloof.  
I hear thy horn thro' dewy valleys wound,  
Far in the distant morn : I hear thy voice

THE LAMENT OF ECHO

Calling thy hounds to breast the roe-buck's  
trace.

I hear and I reply, for my sealed lips  
Are given the power to mimic with their sound  
Thy mountain music. O my hunter love,  
The gods who grudge me much at least give  
this,

And to the challenge of thy ringing shout,  
The sudden-noted bugle at thy side  
I can flute back a tender weird reply.  
This is the only talk allowed my love ;  
When other maids can interchange long vows,  
And know the taste of kisses, I know none.  
O ! were I but a fleet-foot hunting hound  
To be thy patient comrade of the chase,  
To dog thy active steps from dawn to dusk,  
As thy poor shadow, and thou my Phœbus fair,  
The darkness I, projected in the beam  
Behind the splendid footsteps of my lord,

THE LAMENT OF ECHO

Shade of thy path, hound—anything with thee,  
To do thee humble service as a dog,  
And watch thine eyes for fragments, till thou  
toss

Some careless crumbs of favour to my mouth,  
And I would guard thy worn and wearied  
sleep,

Tired with the rapture of the long wet glades.  
Beautiful love, breathe on my anguished  
heart,

Which pines as drougthy fallow for the rain,  
As faint the larchwoods for ambrosial dew ;  
Renew me with thy love so long withheld.  
Why should stern Hera gloom with fateful  
brows,

And curse me for Olympian jealousies ?  
If Zeus grow weary of her hateful arms,  
Why should I pay the forfeit, love-amerced ?  
If thou wilt love me, all her anger fails,

THE LAMENT OF ECHO

And rosy days replace her baffled ire.  
If thou art obdurate and scorn me still,  
Some Nemesis will seize thee in its toils ;  
For not on me alone this bolt will fall,  
And if I pine and wither and fade away,  
If as a floating wreath I haunt these hills  
And melt a phantom voice on eddying gale,—  
Lo, I predict, for my great sorrow and doom  
Unveil the future's landscape partly clear,  
And they who die speak with prophetic truth,  
I can discern from dayspring realms remote  
Drifted to thee a cloud of death so strange  
As never ended love and lover yet.  
Such Até from my ashes will arise,  
And all my beauty will be as a curse  
To drag thee down to Acheronian doors.  
I know not how, yet surely this shall be.

*July 21st, 1895.*

## THE SPEAR OF ACHILLES.

“Così od' io, che soleva la lancia  
D' Achille e del suo padre esser cagione  
Prima di trista, e poi di buona mancia.”

*Inf. xxxi., 3—6.*

He whom the spear of great Achilles tore  
Lingered and pined in anguish from the  
wound.

One remedy in all the world was found,  
Rust from the mighty spear which stung so  
sore.

Such mystic might the barb heroic bore,  
That he who balmed with it the wound around  
Rose in a week with body whole and sound,  
A better warrior than he was before.



THE SPEAR OF ACHILLES

So thou beneath whose piercing word I pine,  
Thou whose unkindness, keen as thrust of  
spear,

Has giv'n me hopeless nights and weary days,  
Let me find leechdom in thy smile divine,  
And love for lingering hate and iron fear,  
Then I shall strongly rise to sound thy praise.

## ON A QUEEN'S PALACE IN RUINS.

(QUEEN JOAN OF NAPLES, 1370—1435.)

Daughter of the silver foam,  
Show me now thy ruined shell !  
Here was once thy radiant home,  
Here thy palace citadel,

Glorious on thy brow with pride :  
Gleaming limbs of rosy hue ;  
Naked breasts too fair to hide,  
Sweet as asphodelian dew.

Mighty captains came and quaffed  
Deep the cups of thy desire,  
Kings sat at thy feet and laughed :  
Cupid watched and fanned the fire.

ON A QUEEN'S PALACE IN RUINS

Time went merrily, my queen,  
As a god they held thee then,  
Ruling with disdainful mien  
Circe-like thy droves of men.

Like a sunset flashing gems,  
Fair thy orient couch was spread ;  
But to kiss thy garment-hems  
Drave thy lovers well-nigh dead.

Lying there, as Danæe lay  
Crushed in rain of rushing gold,  
When the god's resistless way  
In treasure on her bosom rolled ;

Like wan leaves in crisping bowers  
Spreads thy wilderness of hair,  
Near the faces of the flowers  
Where thy regal footsteps were,—

ON A QUEEN'S PALACE IN RUINS

Hair that drank the light and noon  
With its multitude of threads ;  
Thou wast as an amber moon  
Which a cloud-fleece round her sheds.

Thou wast like a daffodil  
Wreathed in veils of misty dawn,  
When thy women at thy will  
Wrapt thy limbs in gold and lawn,

Underneath the gray wych elms,  
By the sobbing hungry sea.  
Voyaging to twilight realms,  
Crowding sail for love of thee,

As a heron with hoarse cries,  
Came their white keels cleaving on,—  
As thro' clear meridian skies  
Southward sweeps the soaring swan.

ON A QUEEN'S PALACE IN RUINS

Pirate kings that loved the brine,  
Helm'd with dragons o'er their brows,  
Pledged thee in enchanted wine,  
Sweeter than their northern spouse.

But thy feasting hall is gone,  
And thy lovers quaff no more,  
And the boats that bore them on  
Rot on some sequestered shore.

All thy rippling tresses rust,  
Silent are thy dove replies,  
And immeasurable dust  
Stains the glory of thine eyes.

Daughter of the ocean foam,  
Broken is thy beauty's spell,  
Fallen is thy golden home,  
Ruined all thy citadel!

## WHAT THE BIRD SINGS.

Summer bird why dost thou linger  
In the blooming hawthorn spray?  
Thou the centre and the singer  
Of the deep enamelled May!

Carol out thy close of splendour—  
Climax of melodious sounds,  
Till the marriage chorus tender  
From a dozen nests resounds.

As the year grows crisp and crisper,  
Blows the musk-rose most divine,  
And there floats ambrosial whisper  
From the ringdove in the pine.

WHAT THE BIRD SINGS

Like a host in midnight shrouded  
Labyrinths of pine advance,  
Gloomy orders ranked and crowded  
With innumerable lance.

Give me glimpses how thy meaning  
To the listening woods is told,  
Mighty tides of concord streaming  
From a pipe of liquid gold.

My dull ear can never capture  
Half the import of thy strain,  
Pathos widening into rapture,  
Pleasure sharpening into pain,

Welcome to expanding nature,  
When the balmy hours' caress  
Fills with love each breathing creature,  
Blessing ás the angels bless.

WHAT THE BIRD SINGS

Doth a moss-lined nest in lonely  
Bough secluded, draw thy wing,  
Where she waits, thy bird-love, only  
Waiting thee in all the spring ?

Build the walls and thatch the cover  
Where the richest roses hang :  
She shall sit and watch her lover,  
Singing as he never sang,

Singing how the balmy season  
Sheds the dewdrop's pearly shower,  
Telling Love the only reason  
Which unsheathes the golden flower,

As the lapse of silver fountains  
Chimes among the braes of fern,  
When the flakes of snow-fed mountains  
Melt and roll a louder burn.



WHAT THE BIRD SINGS

Peace and pleasure, love and passion,  
Joy in sun and zephyr's kiss,  
Thou in no uncertain fashion  
Canst, O Bird, interpret this.

I believe this powerful measure,  
As the incarnate voice of spring,  
Moves the blooms to ope their treasure  
And expands each petal-wing.

I believe the buds in slumber  
Hear thy voice and heed thy call,  
And that bluebells without number  
Pave the woods where thy notes fall.

Rear thy brood in safe seclusion,  
Till beyond the nest they range,  
Happy in thy bird delusion  
That this spring-tide cannot change.

*August 31st, 1895.*

## THE END OF A DELUSION.

Steep, steep in Lethe's stream  
Thy brows, thou barren Dream,  
Delusion cease !  
The fibres of my heart  
Ache, from thy poisoned dart  
I claim release.

There is no sting so dire  
As waking in the mire  
Of passion past ;  
When dripping woods decay,  
And branch-leaves drift away  
In frozen blast ;

When the crisp elmwood groans,  
And the swift river moans,  
Presaging doom.

THE END OF A DELUSION

And as the bough lies shed  
In clay, our troth is dead  
And laid in tomb.

There is no grief so loud  
As winding in her shroud  
Love dead, once dear ;  
There is no mock of pain  
So bitter as disdain,  
Which shames its tear.

In wasted glen and grove,  
Wild creek and wintry cove  
There blooms no rose ;  
And on the leafless bowers  
Thorns are the only flowers  
The season knows.

How came my hand to find  
A bane so sweet, designed  
To bring regret ?

THE END OF A DELUSION

What deep delusion wove  
The toils of tangled Love  
With red thorn set ?

Deep in the raptured May  
I wound my careless way  
By garden grove ;  
There perfumed bowers disclose  
The fresh and fragrant rose  
Of heedless Love.

It seemed a wondrous thing,  
This burnished bud of spring  
So dainty fair ;  
The vermeil gloss of morn,  
The breath of scented thorn  
Suffused it there.

To my supreme surprise,  
It seemed a perfect prize,  
And wholly mine :

THE END OF A DELUSION

I swept the chords of praise  
In pæan of Love's ways  
And flower divine.

I kissed its petal-cheek,  
I fondled, vain and weak,  
A month—a moon ;  
Yet o'er my halting lyre  
Some note of false desire  
Rang out of tune.

Beneath thy rose-leaf reign  
The petals fell amain,  
Until wind-torn,  
The mirage, rolled away,  
Disclosed thy feet were clay,  
Thy lips foresworn.

The waking pang was strong :  
The true-love of old song  
Was never born :

THE END OF A DELUSION

But we are mocked with glows  
And hints of Anterôs,  
Like spurious morn.

O Lethe, balm of shame,  
Wipe out this hateful flame,  
This bane of breath,  
Since for a pinch of dust  
I gave my soul in trust  
To Siren Death.

*September 14th, 1895.*

## A CRADLE SONG.

Sleep, my son, my baby sleep,  
Mother watches by thy bed ;  
Be thy slumbers sound and deep,  
Softly rock the cradle head.

As I watch thy dreaming face,  
I picture from thy tender span  
How this rosy infant grace  
Will harden to the perfect man.

I pray that heaven may send thee, dear,  
The treasure of a loving wife,  
The glory of a grand career,  
The honour of a blameless life.

Thou shalt be a warrior good,  
Strong of arm and keen of eye,  
To the ruler of thy blood  
Faithful to thy latest sigh.

A CRADLE SONG

Thou shalt ride a gallant steed,  
On thy shield the sun-ray glows,  
As thy broadsword, good at need,  
Deals around triumphant blows.

Or in senate thou art great,  
Wise in tongue and cool in brain,—  
A prop and pillar of the state,  
In thy monarch's council-train.

Thine shall be the potent word  
To bid the fretful factions cease ;  
As, binding olive round the sword,  
Thy hand revives the plenteous peace.

Guide of the wise, the true man's trust,  
Captain and statist, loyal friend,  
Thou wilt not let the silence rust  
Thy fame, nor falter to the end.

I see thee bowed in honoured age,  
With children's children at thy knee ;



A CRADLE SONG

And thy renown a golden page  
In the land's happy history.  
I see, my son, thy crescent ray  
Hereafter in the distant years,  
When my warm mother-heart is clay,  
And silence seals my hopes and fears.  
'Twill be my sole and great reward  
To have born a hero to my race :  
Nor in this solace is it hard  
To sleep below the daisy's face.  
My vision ends : my darling wakes ;  
I kiss to calm his wakeful wails.  
Beyond the hill the morning breaks,  
The waning taper flickering fails.  
The noise of birds is just begun,  
And mingles with the cradle cry—  
O grant me, Heaven, my infant son  
May nobly live and nobly die !  
*August 19th, 1895.*

## THE SICK FLOWER.

Hang thy head, O gaudy flower,  
Droop thy petals, droop and fade!  
Winter sweeps the ruined bower,  
Tempest rolls o'er glen and glade.

Born a bud in balmy May,  
Broad and strong in sequent June,  
Waning in October gray,  
Like a dull and dying tune,

Sick thou art, thy prime is o'er ;  
Never shall the roving bee  
Come for nectar at thy door,  
Thy cup will cease to load his knee.

Thy mantle fine of fairy leaves  
To ruined lace the wire-worms drill ;

THE SICK FLOWER

His liquid nest the froth-fly weaves,  
The weevil bites his bitter fill.

O hadst thou gained a daisy's birth,  
Or risen a globe of clover small,  
Thou hadst not gone to mother earth  
In such a tattered funeral!

Thou hadst not soiled in woodland clay  
The record of thy ampler hour,  
O waning love, O setting day,  
Olast-drawn breath of dying flower!

The homely cheek that bore no blush  
Fades gently at the touch of pain ;  
But now to mock thy roseate flush  
Some harsh and tawdry tints remain.

Thy face is like some shipwrecked star,  
Which looks from heaven with dim desire,

THE SICK FLOWER

But cannot dart one beam afar,  
For chill grows all her spheral fire.

O ruined blossom ! pine and weep,  
And let thy dewdrop tears rain fast ;  
Pass gently to thy flowerless sleep,  
Dirged by the bitter autumn blast.

*September 16th, 1895.*

## AN ELEUSINIAN CHANT.

Honey and milk and bread and wine,  
The mystic chest unlades its store,  
The needs of men and the life divine,  
Honey and milk and wine and bread.  
We touch our foreheads to the floor,  
We from the cup libations pour,  
We smite with steel the sacred swine,  
We trebly bar the temple door.  
For she sits, she sits in the inward shrine  
In a garden gown and a wheaten crown.  
Stand apart! ye non-elect,  
Ere our mysteries begin.  
He only keeps his soul erect,  
Who is clean from soil of sin. ,  
As the garment, which ye wear,  
Let your mind be pure as snow ;

AN ELEUSINIAN CHANT

To those who love and those who dare  
The mighty mother is not slow  
To bring illumination near,  
To melt the veil, unwrap the night  
And flood upon the eye and ear  
The sights of dread and sounds of might.  
Ye alone shall gaze in fear  
Whose eyes are ready for the sight ;  
Ye alone shall trembling hear  
Whose minds can fathom depth and height ;  
And ye alone shall peep and peer  
To astral circle, crystal sphere,  
Till the deaf man shall hear  
And the blind man gain light.

Let the priestly choir  
Raise their droning song,  
Voices scaling higher,  
As the hymn grows strong,

AN ELEUSINIAN CHANT

Shawms and flute and lyre.  
Let the augur's throng  
Feed the sacred fire,  
Beat the drum and gong ;  
Let the cymbals ring,  
Let the censer swing  
Till it cloud the fane  
Like the amethyst  
Veils that floating wane  
Above the hilly violet crest  
That crowns the Attic plain.  
But now the pipes refrain  
And let the lyres desist  
Their wailing strain.

Now come the rites of fire,—  
The cleanser of the world,—  
Rose-coloured flames mount higher,  
In quivering spiral curled ;

Now the storax burns  
And burns the resin slow,  
Now the ember turns,  
And gently breathing blow  
Frankincense and myrrh,  
Ambergris and gum.  
Pray the while to her,  
Whose ghostly garments come  
Sweeping the marble floor.  
O make the pavement sweet  
As daffodils to bear  
Touch of the holy feet!  
Now pause in silence dumb,  
And hardly draw your breath,  
Until the symbol come,  
To mention which is death ;  
The emblem of a vast  
Application, mighty sign  
Of awful chrism cast



AN ELEUSINIAN CHANT

Upon a brow divine,  
And beads of sorrow fast  
Falling from eyes that pine.  
The weird of her we praise,  
Who makes the harvest grow.  
Approach and trembling gaze  
Upon the mother's woe.  
Who is she that sits  
In long concluded days,  
On a boulder stone,  
By the bulrush pits?  
Who is she that weeps,  
Weeping for her daughter,  
Making grievous moan  
By the Attic water,  
Broken and alone?  
Hunger in the land,  
Hope of harvest slain :  
Mildew, smut and rust,

AN ELEUSINIAN CHANT

Ears of blighted grain,  
Clouds of poisoned dust :  
Kine that cannot graze,  
Tainted herd and steer  
Dying in the ways :  
Shepherds pale with fear.  
Goes a wail on high  
From hamlets lacking bread.  
The soil is parched and dry,  
No seed will germinate  
The germs of life are dead.  
Some god with scathing hate  
In this our Attic home,  
Hath moved the wheels of Fate  
And cursed it, glebe and loam.  
Why hath this terror come ?  
What trespass hath been ours  
That the seasons lose their date,  
That spring forgets her powers ?

AN ELEUSINIAN CHANT

Curse the cause of all this ill,  
Curse Ascalaphus, the owl,  
Blabbing tongue and bitter skill  
To watch and pry, to peep and prow! :  
With our sign we curse him—thus :—  
Fowl of hell, Ascalaphus,  
Feather-fledged, with large round eyes.  
Perish thus officious spies !  
Sit aloft with snoring horn  
And hoot the dim eclipsing morn ;  
Shroud thy shame in owlet's plume,  
Punished with a righteous doom ;  
Thou, who saw the tiny seed  
Tasted in the halls of gloom.  
With bite nor sup her lips were wet,  
One only grain the maiden ate  
Of clear and rubied pomegranate  
Taken at her utmost need,  
Prompted by an evil fate :

AN ELEUSINIAN CHANT

A speck, a grain, and yet of power  
To hold her in, sweet prisoned flower.  
If she had tasted naught, Zeus said,  
She should return from the halls of dread—  
And this beast told it—thus and thus—  
The trebly-cursed Ascalaphus!

And lo, our mystic service ends  
With symbol of the thrice-ploughed field,  
A fearful weird that sign portends,  
A root immortal, when the seed  
Of awful harvest blends  
A fallow ripe with mystic deed.  
Fearful is the weird.  
Drops of moisture quiver  
On the pale priest's brow,  
And waving like a river  
The broken fallow bends,  
As the thunder-shock is pealed

AN ELEUSINIAN CHANT

O'er the upturned furrows of the field.  
Blue the tapers burn  
At the spirits overhead ;  
The altar-candles turn  
Pale blue from fiery red.  
We feel them at the most,  
But the flame perceives a ghost  
And flickers dim with dread.  
The pure flame quails to hear  
The waft of the floating dead,  
Which cannot reach our ear.  
Extinguish now all light ;  
Pray fervently each one.  
Ye have known a strange delight,  
Ye are wise in love of might ;  
Ye see beyond the sight  
Of a world of fleeting night.  
Our mysteries are done.

## CARPE DIEM.

The year flows on in bloom  
To make lush Autumn room,  
Time takes his mother by the hand to go ;  
The little rippling Hours  
Push tender feet in flowers,  
And Amor, leaning film-eyed on his bow,

Hears the good rain alive  
Tinkling and humming drive  
The molten summer, petal, bloom and seed.  
He lays the peony by ;  
Her core of pride is dry,  
And black her flaming heart as any weed.

Ah! in no other wise  
The yearning swallow cries :  
“Sun-land out yonder, I am weak to go,  
My plumes are hardly set,  
I am a nestling yet,  
And, lo! I scent on northern hills the snow.”

Where chiefly woods have laid  
Their arms of twisted shade,  
Thy footsteps falter in a depth of leaves ;  
Thine eyes are very grey,  
Thy raiment dim as they  
Who stand afar in mist on leaden eves.

Among the wine-deep whin,  
Where red-wings fluster in,  
She sits among the larches that I know,  
Crumbling in each wan hand  
A heath-spike's bells like sand,  
Smiling a little, but her lips are slow.

CARPE DIEM

My lady waits me there,  
A wilful maid right fair,  
Not glad to see or glad to let me stay.  
She knows not her sweet mind,  
Nor kind nor yet unkind,  
A little sorry if I kept away.



## THE WAKING SKYLARK.

Lark of May, alert and gay,  
    Why dost thou sing so loud,  
To steep thy wings in the golden ray,  
    And bathe them in the beaming cloud ?  
Flash to the zenith of burning day,  
    Burn to the under-world laid gray,  
Veiled in a vapour shroud,  
    Till thy song, till thy song is shed.

Bird with throat and note of gold,  
    Sweet as a song in dream  
Thy voice ascends, an anthem rolled  
    To Love who sits supreme,  
What bird like thee of mortal mould  
    Such passion to the sunset told,  
Till she blushed with a rosier beam,  
    As thy song, as thy song was shed ?

THE WAKING SKYLARK

Soar and sing, soar and sing,  
    Fade in the blue from sight.  
The sky-dew quivers on thy wing,  
    Thou quailest with delight  
To sail so near the strong sun's ring  
    While the rushing wheels of his chariot  
        sting  
The clouds to a rosier light  
    As thy song, as thy song is shed.

*August 30th, 1895.*

## AN OLD MAN'S CONSOLATION.

Failure I know is poison to the young.  
My lad, I share your sorrows ; in my day  
I've suffered much, and mastered more like  
these.

You see that I am old, but I am wise  
In that peculiar wisdom, cheaply held,  
To take the common incidents of life  
At proper estimate, not overmuch  
Exalted with the good, nor dashed with ill.

My days have borne no fruit as men account  
The good of life, success, emoluments,  
Respect in public print, and to be noised  
In feeble mouths, the bubble god of the hour.  
I have not even gather'd store of coin  
To make these few declining years of mine

AN OLD MAN'S CONSOLATION

Repay the watching of my hungry heirs,  
Or justify the generous hopes of those  
That knew me at my best : poor have I been  
Always, but never quite at starving point.  
I have not blinded nature from my heart,  
Refusing to the common fields and clouds  
Their excellence of glory. Not in vain  
For me the process of the months resumed  
The cyclic renovation of their powers ;  
And every flower that feeds on English air  
In wilding pomp is my familiar friend ;  
Familiar, too, the voice of every bird,  
In summer's guarded greens and sounding  
dales.

I know not these things as prim science  
knows :

I never read a pompous monograph  
To drowsy benches, and my naked name  
Provokes not half the jumbled alphabet

AN OLD MAN'S CONSOLATION

To jostle in its wake upon the page  
Of scientific records. I have learned  
To praise the simple things before my feet.  
The birds and trees and herbs and animals  
Are incidents enough, and each a world  
Of large experience ; I have lived with these.  
Oft with a townward thought on summer  
    morns,  
When all the birds are round and misted  
    lengths  
Of branchy undulation, zone on zone,  
I leave in spirit the divine excess  
Of nature for the discord and the steam  
Of yonder seething city, picture there  
Its visible nature bounded to a strip  
Of zenith sky, some lean and wisping cloud.  
Thence shuddering back I find the scent of  
    fields,  
And comprehend my full prosperity.

AN OLD MAN'S CONSOLATION

Ambition stings us in the narrow streets  
To push and envy for the public prize.  
Upon the mountain we forget ourselves  
To greatness where no meaner thoughts  
intrude.

You are a boy to me. When I was young  
I too had dreams, as we must all have dreams  
Of making notable this microcosm  
Of self above the level of our peers :  
Such self-opinion chiefly fault and bane  
Of school-day reputation, where I slaved  
When abler men were fallow till their time,  
And where the trick of memory reaped me  
praise,  
That very essence of a school success,  
In after life a mere accessory  
To power of combination and the rare  
And ruling gift, originality.

AN OLD MAN'S CONSOLATION

I found my level soon. Be witness, Heaven,  
How bitter this reaction, when the boy  
Beheld his crumbled idols and awoke  
To scorn himself as much below his powers  
As he was puffed erewhile. This was not  
long.

There is a strong and natural health bestowed  
On youth, prevailing over shocks and falls,  
Beyond the reach of morbid taint or touch  
Of vicious system, still a healthful core.  
I righted swiftly, chose my life with heed  
And lived it with contentment and delight,  
Measuring still my wishes by the power  
To make them deed, contented to resign  
The fruit beyond my reaching. I have found  
As sweet a flavour where before my feet  
Some modest berry hardly clears the soil.

## SORROW INVINCIBLE.

Gray Morn with a tear in her eye,  
Dim Night with a veil behind,  
Soar on the rack of the billowy sky,  
Float on the track of the rolling wind.

The Morn with her refluent hair,  
The Night with her lustrous train,  
Stand on the threshold, each of them fair—  
She will come, she will come again.

For the beautiful wood-leaves are shed  
And Angels have folded each wing—  
So deep is her sleep that I fear she is dead :  
My Rose might have waited for spring.



Slow, Roses, unrivet your buds,  
Ye drowsy great Angels arise !  
But I weep, but I weep, for I never saw sleep  
So heavy on any one's eyes.

Could I only abundantly weep :  
My tear-drops are stinted and slow,  
I am mazed, I am dazed with the sight of  
this thing,  
The dread which I perfectly know.

Bright and light as a mystical bow,  
Over seas a great iris expands,—  
But I think I can certainly show  
That the colour is gone from her hands.

She may sleep thro' it all, if she choose :  
I shall see her again as I did,  
They were cruel to drive in their screws,  
They were foolish to fasten the lid.

SORROW INVINCIBLE

I shall have her up out of the grass  
Live and clean here in front of you all.  
You are wrong ; I am right : she shall pass  
To her chair and her work in the hall,  
With a glad little serious sigh,  
When the boys at her apron cling :  
Perfectly quiet and joyfully  
Righting the child's collar string :  
Setting the cradle to swing  
With a tender light touch of her feet :  
Taking her knitting—no phantom thing—  
But a pale mother, earthborn and sweet.  
I know she must yearn to be back,  
Too young are these children she leaves :  
She will come, she will come tho' the stars  
are dumb  
And the dust to her eyelids cleaves.

SORROW INVINCIBLE

For I saw her in moonlight gray,  
    Veiled round with a crescent of light ;  
A ray at her hand, from her hand came a ray  
    Like a wave on a starry night.

I saw her again, near a wall  
    With peach blossoms, Hatefully June  
Burnt on the brick, and the paths were sick  
    In the drought of the furnace noon.

I saw her as plain as my hand :  
    And still thro' her form, clear as glass,  
I never could quite understand  
    How the sunbeams managed to pass.

Or how in that garden I gazed  
    Beyond her, to where on a bush  
A small robin sat unamazed,  
    And swelled out his notes like a thrush.

SORROW INVINCIBLE

I shall see her again, when my head  
    Snaps sudden in death at one blow,  
You won't keep me then in this bed,  
    Out of window my spirit will go.

Over seas, over seas to my Sweet,  
    Out into the great dawn there,  
There her I shall certainly meet ;  
    Get the children up quick round my chair !

Very soon I shall give you the slip,—  
    Put close their small palms into mine,  
Raise them up, one by one, to my lip :—  
    Day breaks in a sphere red as wine.

God lives in that river of light.  
    She sits on the sward where it springs,  
Certainly sits. She is waiting to-night.  
    My dove, I soon shall gain my wings.

## THE HEDGE.

There is a hedge, where round deep ivy root  
The wren creeps darkling in her covert shy;  
The dunnock trills a hesitating flute,  
And bramble-berries lure the burnished fly.

On either side in rough disorder hang  
Long straws and ears torn from the brush-  
ing wain,  
And the strong red thorned roses fix their fang  
And toll, as gleaners toll, the passing grain.

There bindweed lilies cupped in roseate dew,  
And bryony's polished leaves tuft-vine like  
fruit,  
And purple-stemmed the honeysuckle grew,  
With intertwined amatory shoot.

## THE HEDGE

And here the dragon-fly in glory is  
Moving in mailed array a burning star,  
And like a white-veiled nun the clematis  
Peeps on the world behind her cloister bar.

And here are privet blossoms for the bees.  
And many a poised enamelled butterfly  
Comes to my hedge and sips the dew at ease,  
Kissing the faces of the flowers thereby.

There, coarse and rank, the furrowy kexes  
spired,  
And wild hop curved in many a gay festoon,  
And marestail in all nosegays undesired  
Jostled the musk-rose, summer's sweetest  
boon.

Now gaze across the arum's fiery head,  
Which lights the inner hedge up like a torch,

## THE HEDGE

And lo, behold, not fifty yards ahead,  
A gabled cottage with a bowery porch.

And here I feed on prospect fairer far  
Than sight of flower or bird or any tree,  
And here I watch the rising of that star  
Whose ray is more than Hesperus to me.

The drifted petals of cape jessamine  
Perfume the entrance with their falling  
shower,  
While high in air the crowded rose divine  
Around that threshold weaves a royal bower.

Within the porch and shadowed from the heat,  
In wicker cage a blackbird pipes his song,  
Sighs for the dewy woods expanded sweet  
And trills the rapture of his captive wrong.

THE HEDGE

A spinning wheel beside the doorway stands ;  
Some one will come and turn it by and bye,  
And twist the slender thread with fairy hands,  
And sit and sing, or sit and heave a sigh.

She weaves me days of smile and nights of  
tear,  
She winds me love and she unwinds despair,  
She seems like Fortune, bending o'er her  
sphere,  
As pitiless as Fortune and as fair.

She weaves a wondrous web about my soul,  
Until her wheel goes round, I watch and  
wait,  
For yonder spinning maiden must control  
The thread of my existence like a Fate.

*August 30th, 1895.*



## AT HEAVEN'S GATE.

The last of all the starry flock,  
Red Phosphor fades in amber skies,  
Hoarse in the farmstead crows the cock,  
Harsh from the glen the owl replies.

Lovely and dim the star of morn,  
A sphere of rayless ruby glows :  
Until the Day divine is born  
On cloudy bed of tinselled rose.

When long-divided zones of pearl  
Announce the silken steps of Day,  
I wake before the silent merle,  
I waken and I soar away.

AT HEAVEN'S GATE

The waves of heaven with cloudy crest  
Come rippling eastward like a tide ;  
No longer in my moss-lined nest  
The minstrel bird of heaven will bide.

'Tis meet and right my lofty lyre  
Shall greet Apollo's orient rays :  
That I ascend, as stars retire,  
And soaring trill my hymn of praise ;

That first of nature's wakening choir,  
Sweet incense to the Lord I bring :  
That my devotion wafts me higher  
Than clouds which tire an eagle's wing,

The angel of the unrisen morn,  
The herald bird with note of fire:  
Within whose fervid breast are born  
The longings of a world desire,

AT HEAVEN'S GATE

The pæan to the mighty power  
Pervading heaven, pervading earth :  
At whose command the genial hour  
Breaks iris-tinted in its mirth.

Then I become a morning psalm,  
65 And carol, where (are) never heard  
In solitudes of astral calm  
The twitter of a groundling bird.

Where heaven is near I sing alone ;  
For other feeble warbling throats  
Fail far below my seraph zone,  
Nor dare intrude their earthborn notes.

Let Philomel's harmonious breath  
Ring out her prelude of despair.  
Can tales of turbid love and death  
Pollute that pure and crystal air ?

AT HEAVEN'S GATE'

Let the false cuckoo tell the vale  
His double-noted name unblest ;  
Let greedy starlings rate and rail,  
And jackdaws bicker round their nest.

Let robins in malignant strife  
Pipe triumph o'er a rival slain,  
The red-breast hypocrites, whose life  
Is sequel to the deeds of Cain.

From Thames to Nile let swallows cross,  
Let petrels sing the dirge of wrecks.  
I envy not the ringdoves' gloss  
Nor burnish of their tinselled necks.

I envy not the feather-eyes,  
When Juno's fowl her train expands ;  
Nor when the halcyon's rainbow dyes  
Recall some bird of tropic lands.

AT HEAVEN'S GATE

I have no beauty : wing and breast  
Are dim, suffused with speckled greys ;  
A homely bird : yet from my nest  
Ascends a strain of regal praise.

I am the clarion of the morn :  
Between the clouds I fade from sight.  
The mountains hear my elfin horn ;  
I, singing, melt away in light.

I am all music, throat and breast,  
And music from my trembling wing  
Is shaken, as I poise at rest :  
Soaring I never cease to sing.

I throb with full excess of song,  
I quiver in melodious pain ;  
And, as I flutter, sweet and strong  
My strain descends in golden rain.

AT HEAVEN'S GATE

Mine is the glory of the praise  
That does not seek itself to bless,  
And mine the meed of blameless days,  
Which heaven bends o'er with dove caress.

Mine is the soaring life afar,  
Which, self-forgetting, heaven endears ;  
Mine is the radiance of the star,  
And mine the music of the spheres.

*September 29th, 1895.*

## A SONG OF DESPAIR.

The earth is dust, dust, dust,  
Heaven is but empty air,  
Faith falters in distrust,  
The throne of God is bare.

The saint has worshipped wind,  
The seer has seen a lie.  
The round globe deaf and blind  
Rolls on eternally.

The priests in golden domes  
With blood and fire entreat  
The hand that never comes,  
The long-delaying feet.

A SONG OF DESPAIR

As feeble bells of foam,  
The creeds are cracked and lost,  
Like clouds without a home,  
Like waves without a coast.

The foolish peoples tease  
Fate—Nature—what you will.  
Suns roll and moons decrease,  
And men are evil still.

Who sins, by Nature sins,  
The pure by birth are so.  
The game Death always wins,  
Tho' we play high or low.

The heart is nerve and flesh,  
The brain a mere machine.  
Some slave in sensual mesh,  
Some virtue saves serene.



A SONG OF DESPAIR

The lecher and the saint  
One equal dust awaits ;  
The same sepulchral taint,  
The same tremendous Fates.

Whether thou diest at peace,  
Slain in a noble cause :  
Or, like this gutter, cease  
Stabbed in some tavern brawl ;

Be thou a man of jest,  
Thy mirth must soon be done ;  
The threshold of thy west  
Saves but an hour of sun ;

Be thou a toper brave,  
Who finds the vine juice good,  
Who trolls a ribald stave  
To jog his frozen blood.

A SONG OF DESPAIR

Be thou some narrow soul  
Who grubs in sordid pelf,  
And lives merely to roll  
More bags upon the shelf.

As warden of the church,  
Thy farmyard corner sway ;  
And from thy village perch  
Proclaim the time of day.

And thou the meanest thing  
Who draweth human breath ;  
Whose mildewed features cling  
To a skull-like mask of death,

Art thou some radiant queen,  
Child of a golden clime,  
Too lovely to be seen,  
The rosebud of her time ?

A SONG OF DESPAIR

Come, end this comic thing :  
Down bid the curtain float.  
Shift thyself, pasteboard king,  
And peel thy spangled coat.

When Death as reaper mows,  
A varied swath he seeks,  
He garners in the rose,  
He gathers up the leeks.

The burdock harsh and hard,  
The hemlock's spotted breast,  
Narcissus of the bard,  
The lily's plummy crest,—

He rolls them in one sheaf,  
Where the idle tares are curled  
Round the stem and ear and leaf,  
Whose grain sustains the world.

A SONG OF DESPAIR

We hear his hand is Love,  
And hold his rod benign ;  
We seek in heaven above,  
And in the deep a sign

Ascend thy bleak black tower,  
Blind watchman, blear and grey,  
And search the coming hour  
That wings from far away.

The signals of the night  
Are dim with haze and dread :  
Dull shapes perplex the sight,  
Pale phantoms of the dead.

What hope, when for reply  
No sound his warden hears,  
No cry, save his own cry,  
No drip, save his own tears ?

A SONG OF DESPAIR

They sent him up to hail  
The laggard moonbeam back :  
He sees the vulture sail  
Grim on the lurid track.

He finds no hint of morn,  
But fears that on the plain  
The royal flag is torn,  
The gallant trooper slain.

For the winds are rocking loud  
Across the burning heath,  
And yonder fiery cloud  
That mimics dawn is Death.

*July 26th, 1894.*

## LINES TO A LADY-BIRD.

Cow-lady, or sweet lady-bird,  
Of thee a song is seldom heard.  
What record of thy humble days,  
Almost ignored in poets' lays,  
Salutes thy advent? Oversung  
Is Philomel by many lyres ;  
And how the lark to heaven aspires,  
Is rumoured with abundant fame,  
While dim oblivion wraps thy name.  
Hail ! then, thou unassuming thing,  
A bright mosaic of the spring,  
Enamelled brooch upon the breast  
Of the rich-bosomed rose caressed.  
Thy wings the balmy zephyrs bear

LINES TO A LADY-BIRD

When woods unfold in vernal air,  
When crumpled buds around expand,  
Thou lightest on our very hand.  
Red as a robin thou dost come,  
Confiding, in entreaty dumb.  
Who would impede thy harmless track,  
Or crush thy wing or burnished back ?  
'Tis said, thy lighting and thy stay  
Bring luck : and few would brush away  
The small unbidden crawling guest,  
But let thee sheathe thy wings in rest,  
And take thy voluntary flight  
Uninjured to some flower's delight.  
For there is nothing nature through,  
Lovely and curious as you :  
A little dome-shaped insect round,  
With five black dots on a carmine ground.  
What art thou ? I can hardly tell.  
A little tortoise of the dell

LINES TO A LADY-BIRD

With carapace or vaulted shell  
Of shining crimson? Or again,  
I picture thee, in fancy plain,  
A little spotted elfin cow,  
Of whose sweet milk a milkmaid fairy  
Makes syllabub in Oberon's dairy.  
Thou hast a legend-pedigree  
That gives thy race a high degree  
From the shed blood of Venus sweet,  
Thorn-wounded in her pearly feet,  
As thro' the dewy woods she went,  
Love-lorn, in utter discontent,  
Listening afar the echoing horn  
Of coy Adonis, in whose scorn  
The Love-queen languished, love-forlorn.  
He burned to hunt the boar at bay,  
And loathed the lover's idle play ;  
So Venus followed in the chase  
And from her wounded heel a trace



LINES TO A LADY-BIRD

Of blood-drip tinged the dewy mead,  
And, from the ichor she did bleed,  
From Aphrodite's precious blood,  
Arose the lady-birds, a brood  
As gentle as the hurt of love,  
That gave them birth and parentage  
In legends of the golden age.  
But, coming to our modern day,  
Thee peevish children scare away,  
And speed thy flight with evil rhyme,  
Waving an idle hand meantime,  
To make thee spread thy wings in fear  
With rumours of disaster near,  
And tidings of thy home in flames,  
And all thy burning children's names,  
How all are scorched but Ann alone  
Who safely crept inside a stone ;  
With many an old unlettered fable  
Of churlish lips inhospitable.

LINES TO A LADY-BIRD

And when these fancies all are past,  
I see thee as thou art at last,  
A welcome sign of genial spring,  
Awaited as a swallow's wing,  
The cuckoo's call, the drone of bee,  
The small gnat's dancing minstrelsy.  
Ere hawthorn buds are sweetly stirred  
I bid thee hail, bright lady-bird!

*August 21st, 1895.*

## THE BALLAD OF LIFE.

I rode out in the morning,  
The spring was in my blood.  
I gave the devil scorning :  
The world was ripe and good.

The throstle cock on every hedge  
Sang madly with delight.  
It was May within and May without,  
And never a thought of night.

A fig for Fortune, break her wheel,  
And tear the spokes away !  
A fig for death by shot or steel,  
A fig for hairs of gray !

THE BALLAD OF LIFE

Let Fortune take or Fortune bring,  
Come peace or rolling war,  
I follow like an eastern king  
The zenith of my star.

Old beldam of a Pagan birth,  
To stern oblivion hurled !  
For boys are masters of the earth,  
And youth directs the world.

The fruit of time is mine, right fair  
Shed from a golden horn ;  
And fragrant as this hawthorn air  
To-morrow will be born.

The girl I wanted long is won :  
I have ripe ale in store.  
My heart is good and my road is good,  
And my horse is swift and sure.

THE BALLAD OF LIFE

Then ho! my steed, for the flowery mead,  
Where the amber currents run.  
I ride, I ride in the royal pride  
Of youth and the spring-tide sun.

I carol away in the sweet May day,  
I am coming, my rose, to thee ;  
In the garden of life a most exquisite flower  
Is growing and blowing for me.

Then spur my steed, till his hot flanks bleed,  
And rush like a torrent fall ;  
Haste to the dove, who is waiting alone,  
My love that is truest of all.

And I rode to the bower in a fatal hour ;  
As black against the day,  
A bitter cloud ran out like a shroud  
And the rainbow melted away.

## THE BALLAD OF LIFE

The gates were barred as the gates of hell,  
And I heard, by the mass ! I heard  
My rival's voice, who strummed on a lute,  
And wailed like a love-sick bird.

And when the music ended,  
Began the kissing play,  
And her happy laughter blended,  
As she gave her lips away.

But the torture of their blisses  
Burnt me like molten lead,  
And that agony of kisses  
Brought gray hairs on my head.

I crawled back in the gloaming  
In the grip of a giant grief,  
Thro' the bitter drench of the driving hail,  
And the swirl of the rushing leaf.

The storm-cloud onwards muttering came ;  
I saw the fireballs glint.  
My gallant horse he went dead lame  
On a shard of pointed flint.

Then ho ! my steed, for a land of reed,  
Where the banks of Lethe run  
In the sickened ray of a waning day  
And the gleam of a fading sun.

And I know that clap of thunder  
Will sour my home-brewed beer,—  
And I wonder, and I wonder  
How love could turn so sere.

There is nothing new to say or do,  
But to creep to a ditch and die.  
There is no truth or faith or ruth  
Beneath the barren sky.

THE BALLAD OF LIFE

Then ho ! my steed, to the dead man's mead,  
Where the lying Love is dumb.  
Blind Fortune rules in a realm of fools  
And the devil's kingdom is come.

*July 16th, 1895.*



## THE INVITATION.

Come, my love, upon the mountains,  
Amber day is almost-done.  
Like the drift of golden fountains  
Gleam your ringlets in the sun.

For the pimpernel at even  
Half shuts up her crimson eye,  
Wide she stared at open heaven,  
When the noon fell hot and dry.

At the zenith of their cluster  
Bloom three sister flowers of heath,  
Veiling hill with wine-deep lustre  
In an amethystine wreath.

## THE INVITATION

First, the deep cinereous heather,  
Next, the paler heath-bell springs  
Nodding cream-rose heads together,  
Last, the small-flowered lilac lings.

Here long fields of scarlet clover  
With bright breadths of hawthorn blend :  
Gently on the enamelled cover  
Silver-crystal dewes descend.

Swallows hang at eave and gable,  
Some in wavering circles drift :  
Like a rushing comet sable  
Swings the wide-winged screaming swift.

Here are hedges where the hornbeams  
Brownly hang all winter long :  
Leaves that catch the slanting morn-beams,  
Leaves that mask the linnet's song,

THE INVITATION

Come upon the hills, my darling,  
Come where grass is sweet and deep,  
We will watch the speckled starling  
Perched upon the short-eared sheep.

Here the bents for many a gowan  
Or slight harebell shalt thou search :  
For thy lips are like the rowan,  
And thy arms are like the birch.

Come, love, where the sundew glitters,  
Four round leaves of dewy red.  
Come, where shrill the skylark twitters  
To a throbbing speck o'erhead.

In those hayfields, red with sorrel,  
Ox-eye daisies wade abreast :  
By that stile we had a quarrel  
All about a chaffinch nest.

## THE INVITATION

Under that shock-headed teazel,  
Like a ploughman among flowers,  
You were startled by a weazel  
Crept to shelter from the showers.

See, these hazel nuts I've found them,  
Half are green and half are rosed,  
With the ragged frill around them  
In a triple cluster closed.

There in yonder flowering privet,  
While with clasping hands we kissed,  
Snap it went, the golden rivet  
Off the bracelet at your wrist.

Then we heard the goldfinch whistle  
In his coat of gold and red,  
Then we watched him tear the thistle  
And the knapweed, head by head.

THE INVITATION

There we saw the tutsan tarnish  
Fragrant leaves of metal sheen,  
Plump its waxy fruit and varnish  
Eggs of coral frilled in green.

Many flowers I brought my treasure,  
Blooms I showed my mountain bee,  
Cones of wild rose, gold-of-pleasure,  
Butcher's broom, anemone ;

Wrinkled oaks and plummy bracken,  
cab Milkwort, skull-cup, sweet gale-bush,  
Frog-pipe, more than you can reckon,  
Cotton grass and flowering rush.

Rosy-stemmed the woodbine's tangle,  
Rings of horn-like honied flowers,  
Grape-like bryony clusters dangle  
From the secret hazel bowers.

## THE INVITATION

There I'll clasp thee like a lover  
And my arms around thee spread,  
As the dodder wraps the clover  
Round with tight-drawn ropes of red.

In my love I cannot waver,  
Thou to me art Fate and Doom :  
I should die to lose thy favor,  
I am constant till the tomb.

If the petrel has no portal  
Save the threshold of the foam,  
Yet the swallow loves the mortal,  
Building nest upon his home.

None the thistledown can follow  
In its flight for many miles,  
Yet the house-leek, like a swallow,  
Settles on the village tiles.

THE INVITATION

O I am not light and fickle,  
None such sweetness could betray ;  
Time will weep upon his sickle  
When he wrongs thy gold with gray.

*August 9th, 1894.*

## THE DIRGE OF DAY.

This is the dirge of Day !  
She is gone her western way ;  
The world sighs after her receding feet.  
    Wood-echoes mock their beat,  
Thin leaves round dozing linnets gently shock.  
The languid bells along the sheep-cotes rock,  
    Just rock, while their meek herds  
Move with them, as to words  
    I seem to hear them say—  
    Farewell, thou faded Day !

This is the dirge of Day !  
On the verge of some sea-bay,  
Pale in a canopy of golden rain,



## THE DIRGE OF DAY

Whose Danæe drops amain  
Beat o'er her sleepy face and ardent hair,  
Extinct from stress of fiery Phœbus there,  
Slain on her bridal bed,  
As Semele lay dead,  
Scorched thro' with the numerous ray,  
So lies, so dies the Day.

Mourn, Ocean, mourn the Day !  
Life ends as children's play,  
Ephemeral pastime, then enduring sleep.  
Sing music of the Deep !  
With voice in all thy ridges, mellowing sound,  
As the gale moves some branchy mountain  
ground—  
Sing ; moon and star will fade,  
And the world's dirge be made,  
And heaven will pass away  
As the dirge of one fleet Day !

THE DIRGE OF DAY

Rain, rain to end the Day !  
Ye valley-winds convey  
Sad showers along the stony-terraced rills,  
Mist-mantles on the hills,  
Whose spectral boulders drip with human  
tears,  
Where mossy rocks seemed crushed with  
crumbling years.  
And yonder quarried scaur,  
Like some slain swan afar,  
Whose shining wings decay  
Prone on the porch of Day !

Die out and perish, Day !  
We deck thy bier in gray,  
With gray-green pine and sad slate-coloured  
rue,  
And tufted rosemary, too ;  
There lies her face as wan as winter cloud ;

THE DIRGE OF DAY

These glen-leaves are one colour with her  
shroud,

One colour with her hands

Which, crossed like ivory wands,

Seem folded each to pray.

A dirge, a dirge for Day!

Thus shall we bring thee, Day,

A fair lamenting lay,

And spread pink-berried yew beside thy sleep

And cypress, as we weep,

That bough of mourning nourished on a grave,

And, singing with sad breath our funeral stave,

Say, let each forest thing,

Whose note is sorrowing,

Reed, wave and rocking spray,

Raise with us dirge o'er Day.

What sepulchre hath Day,

And where entomb her clay?

THE DIRGE OF DAY

Deck her in death-array, and lay her down

In wood-earth silver-brown :

And o'er her head beneath the iron sky

Let leaves in amber drifts go rustling by

With drop of chestnut ball,

And ash-keys for a pall,

And boughs that weeping sway

Across the grave of Day !

## A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE.\*

EYES calm as heaven, hair with an amber  
gleam :

Hands interlocked ; lips precious moist with  
myrrh :

So soft her mouth-line is, to look on her  
A man would say, this innocence doth seem  
The child of Artemis, whose chastities  
Are colder than the snow-flake on a grave ;  
A mouth of dove replies and charities,  
Musical as some silver-shadowed wave ;  
Lips that refrain love's laughter and are mute  
To the gross sighs and suit  
Of earthly lovers, and the whispering lute,  
Whined midst insidious darkness to decoy  
Some bleating lamb into the wolfish pen.  
This face would darken at such childish toy,

\* Fragments of "A Daughter of Circe" appeared in the First and Second Series of *Poems Dramatic and Lyrical* (JOHN LANE, 1893, 1895). The ode is now published in its complete form.

A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

These lips approach not Passion's lurid den :  
Their silence is an interval of prayer  
Away with God in air,  
Their speech a prayer renewed to God again.  
Nothing less sacred than a heavenly vow  
Could ever break their tender-margined rose,  
Or tune their silvery flow,  
Or film those eyes' repose  
With prayer's ecstatic pathos and suffuse  
God's cups with pity's dew :  
So her pure palms can have no other way  
Than to be put together up to pray,  
Tenderly pillowed, fervent, each on each,  
Symphonious to the childish trickling speech,  
With bird-like interruptions sweet and sharp  
Asking, a little hungry sparrow in nest,  
Her father bird to come  
And find a crumb,  
Till in his down her feathers be caressed.

A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

A kind of beacon cauldron poised on high,  
Hooped round with ember-clasping iron bars,  
Sways in her palace porch, and smoulderingly  
Drips out in blots of fire and ruddy stars ;  
But out behind that trembling furnace air  
The lands are ripe and fair ;  
Hushed are the hills, and quiet to the eye.  
The river's reach goes by,  
With lamb and holy tower and squares of  
corn,  
And shelving interspace  
Of holly bush and thorn,  
And hamlets happy in an Alpine morn,  
And deep-bowered lanes with grace  
Of woodbine newly born.

But inward, o'er the hearth a torch-head  
stands  
Inverted, slow green flames of fulvous hue,

Echoed in wave-like shadows over her ;  
A censer's swing-chain set in her fair hands  
Dances up wreaths of intertwined blue,  
Each from its orifice in the thurifer.  
And in the midmost of her chamber grew  
A giant tulip-head, and two pale leaves  
Grew in the midmost of her chamber there—  
A flaunting bloom, naked and undivine,  
Rigid, and bare,  
Gaunt as a tawny bond-girl born to shame,  
With freckled cheeks and splotched side  
    serpentine,  
A gipsy among flowers,  
Unmeet for bed or bowers  
Virginal, where pure-handed maidens sleep :  
Let it not breathe a common air with them,  
Lest, when the night is deep,  
And all things have their quiet in the moon,  
Some birth of poison from its leaning stem



A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

Waft in between their slumber-parted lips,  
And they cry out or swoon,  
Deeming some vampire sips,  
Where riper Love may crave for nectar boon !

And near this tulip, reared across a loom,  
Hung a fair web of tapestry half done,  
Crowding with folds and fancies half the  
room—

Men eyed as gods and damsels still as stone,  
Pressing their brows alone,  
In amethystine robes,  
Or reaching at the polished orchard globes,  
Or rubbing parted love-lips on their rind,  
While the wind  
Sows with sere apple leaves their breast and  
hair.

And all the margin there  
Was arabesqued and bordered intricate

A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

With hairy spider things  
That catch and clamber,  
And salamander, in his dripping cave,  
Satanic ebon-amber ;  
Blindworm, and asp, and eft of cumbrous  
gait,  
And toads who love rank grasses near a  
grave,  
And the great goblin moth, who bears  
Between his wings the ruined eyes of death ;  
And the enamelled sails  
Of butterflies, who watch the morning's  
breath,  
And many an emerald lizard with quick ears  
Asleep in rocky dales.  
And for an outer fringe embroidered small,  
A ring of many locusts, horny-coated,  
A round of chirping tree-frogs, merry-  
throated,

A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

And sly, fat fishes sailing, watching all.  
Above that web two Cupids, rosy-necked,  
Almost alive in tinted Parian rock,  
Mingle their locks together ; their gauzed  
wings  
Tremble and fan with light, aërial shock ;  
As when two bees within one peony swing,  
These brother Loves embrace,  
Rosed with the shadow of the rose's face.  
With fragrant mouths they seem to inter-  
breathe,  
And there is passion in their lips of stone  
That moves the very marble into grace,  
With flushes underneath  
And fiery tone.  
And on each image her enchanted fire  
Reddens and shimmers at its dædal play.  
One holds a rose—that means long love  
desire :

A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

One holds an asphodel—that means reward.  
And on their brows is coral-berried yew,  
An emblem harsh and hard,  
That means—Ah, well-a-day !—  
For lovers false and lovers true,  
Sleep and its cloudy pinions silvering  
The folded hands and sharpened faces grey,  
Sleep on her raven wing—  
Sleep that no magic flower can charm away  
Or make us rise again,  
The slain of Love, the slain  
Of the huge hooks and spearheads of  
Despair.  
O ! asphodel, Elysian asphodel,  
Bedding Adonis in his wounded pain,  
Flower of the heroes' dell,  
Canst thou put breath between those wasted  
lips  
That hold the boatman's toll,

A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

The coin and wage for which old Charon  
ships

The Lethe-crossing soul ?

Thy might is ended where the grave begins,  
And thine innocuous spells

Fall by the margin of the sea of sins,  
Done with as empty shells.

But for a season men acclaim thee queen,  
And for a little none disputes thy power ;  
All nature lies before thee fresh and green,  
My locust, to devour.

Lady of blood and tears, the road to thee  
Is paved with bramble spines that tear the  
feet.

Thy firm, white breasts are beautiful to see,  
Beyond all breath of roses thou are <sup>5</sup> sweet.  
Thy brows, more lovely than the moonlight,  
are

Woven with many a star

Of the delicious, deadly asphodel,  
That in thy tresses braided, shines afar,  
What time thou weavest a spell,  
Stern as Medea in her dragon car,  
And cruel as Medusa's sculptured face  
Set on a targe of war.

Yet thou enticest men with childish grace  
And hesitations, as some bashful flower  
Fears to unfold her petals to the morn,  
In rathe rude April born.

What blind one, wearing eyes and wanting  
wit

Wilt thou, pale Circe, venture to allure,  
Kissing the tender hands he deems so pure,  
Ready and ripe for doom,  
Enamoured of delight and hungry for the  
tomb?

A shrine of love indeed, more fell than hate,  
A charnel masked with rose,

What serpents at thy cruel precinct wait,  
Around the agate columns of thy door  
In deadly coils repose ?  
What pythons trail the polished altar floor ?  
What toad unsanctified  
Bedews with venom face  
The slippery pavement side ?  
And in thy golden chalice adders twine,  
Wherein thou brewest for thy lovers wine,  
A cup of consolation, healing all  
And ending as a pall  
Dropt slowly o'er the dead.

In saffron-coloured weed  
Death, as a bridegroom clad ;  
Thy comrade good at need  
The red wine makes him glad.  
A wreath is on his hair,  
Poison his garlands breathe—

Dwale, henbane, aconite,  
▲ Faint Acherontian flowers,  
As many as there be,  
When things less harmful blight,  
From gardens of despair  
And the long-weeping hell-queen's midnight  
    bowers,  
Stolen Persephone.  
Death shall divide his posies with thine own,  
And spare the nightshade apples, and  
    monkshood  
Whereat the adder sips,  
And, as a bee, finds good  
Its deadly honeyed lips.  
O ! Circe, take them all—  
Nightshade that mocks the ivy in its leaves  
To crown the Bacchus of thy festival,  
And crown thee by his side  
Death's consort queen and bride ;



A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

Tear up the mandrake trails and wind them  
Proudly around thy glory ;  
What though its leaves behind them  
With fang-froth yet are hoary ?  
'Tis but the cuckoo's kiss  
Which bathes the clematis,  
Or the ragged robin often  
When east winds begin to soften ;  
Drape it around thee—see,  
What dewdrop pearls there be  
Inside the pretty cups, and lower down  
Bunches of little grapes just turning brown ;  
The wild vine this, on Golgotha it grows,  
Born in a place of woes,  
Around thy beauty wear and wind its trails.  
Thou wouldst not shudder much  
In wreathing thee  
To interwist the father of this dew,  
Some Python full of scales,

Deadly to sight and touch,  
Gorgonian, in thy lengths of lustrous hair :  
And let its flickering head and beaming eyes  
Glitter like jewels there.  
Thy spells of fear  
Thou couldst not mutter worse  
For such a prompter at thine ear,  
Nor dread to cherish in thy bosom clear,  
Or on thy shoulder fair,  
This hissing serpent curse :  
As an infant Eros wrestling  
With a childish, hungry note,  
With his nurse Dione, nestling  
Head against her alabaster throat.  
And having wreathed herself in snaky coils,  
Tho' not for long,  
She intermits her spells and muttered toils  
To sing a bitter song :  
A feigning parable of chastity,

Nun-like, with eyes demure,  
Full of hypocrisy,  
To bait her trap more sure,  
To seem what she is not and draw men in  
Beneath her nets till they are slain with sin.

“ False love, sweet love, false love, thy prim-  
rose lands

Are bitten by a sea that gnaws and stains :  
False love, thy river may have golden sands,  
Yet rocks it sighing on thro' flinty plains.  
The low, continuous forest hears of Love,  
The cloud-crest tells the under-lake of him :  
The March wind is his furious trumpeter :  
The cuckoo is his clear remembrancer :  
The glow-worm lights his torch, his herald  
dim.

Yet will I nothing of this herdsman Love,  
This god of bread and cheese,

This paragon of plough-girls ; at mine ease,  
 Saint and serene above  
 Their trivial kisses, with the stars I hear  
 The oracles of God  
 Sown on the windy pinnacles of night.  
 As some peak never trod,  
 Rosy and pure in rarest ether set,  
 But from the world's creation icebound yet,  
 Sweet as the morning, inaccessible ;—  
 That rock shall be my sign. The terrible  
 Sun shall not change my calm ærial snows,  
 Nor his most golden hour  
 Shall melt my Danæe tower :  
 Nor his rich rain of beams  
 Unfreeze the frozen seams  
 Of the gauze clouds that veil me in my  
     bower.  
 I am sealed and set away  
 From Love, that village play.

Fool, bring me not his goblet or his rose.  
I will not drink his chalice with these churls.  
If I be fair—and you will have me so—  
How should I know?  
I will not use my beauty like these girls,  
Who give it up to men  
For a few seasons to be mouthed and  
mumbled,  
Wintered with grief, or in the cere-cloth  
crumbled,  
Doll for a moon, and house-drudge for a  
year,  
With menial fret and tear  
Stained, once a festal robe, now threadbare  
weed  
Fit but for vilest need,  
Or thrown on shards or mixens of despair.  
Such doom how should I bear,  
That am Urania,

Air-queen Titania,

The flower blush and the morning's fragrance  
rare ?

Ah ! I will not let my curious flesh

Be tasted like an apple ; shall my bloom

As some sick wood-thing's in the hunter's  
mesh

Make hound and vulture track me to my  
doom ?

I will not put my mouth up to some fool

And be unvirgined for the kiss of him.

I will remain damsel of God, and rule

My worst thought purer than the morning-  
rim.

What is this peasant homespun web of Love,  
Rank with the daily toil of hardened hands ?

What is this vineyard lodge, this red alcove,  
Reed-roofed and latticed in with thorny-  
wands ?

The floor is purple with the broken grape ;  
The vats are foamed with ferment. Hand  
in hand,  
Red to the knee, each Bacchanalian shape  
Tramples the rich blood of the vintage lands,  
Or leaning to their lovers fling the strands  
Of their wild hair adrift and breast to breast  
Reel in the dance, caressing and caressed.  
What time the year is younger  
And oak leaves yet are small,  
And nestlings gape with hunger,  
And merry crow-boys call,  
And o'er the purple fallows  
The greedy rooks are swaying,  
And, as the morning mellows,  
The wenches troop a-maying,  
Near by some croft, half hid by rustic eaves,  
The milkmaid rests her pail among the leaves,  
And the drawn cow begins to graze anew.

Then if some shepherd fellows chance to pass,  
One comes and sits him by this freckled lass  
And puts his brows to hers and holds her hand,  
Coarse-cheeked and stained with summer,

where the grass

Shoots up in timothies and ox-eyes too,  
And in rathe sorrel, reddest of Spring's crew,  
And pale green spikes are everywhere around,  
And chirping things give sound,  
Hid down within the fodder, birds too young  
To fly, the twisted stems among,  
Because the deep high math entangles such,  
Who left the nest edge ere their plumes were  
much,

But who will soar ere harvest-moon be here.  
So deep in grass, as two hid birds, this pair  
Smear their rude mouths with rustic kisses  
there.

Love! this is Love, the rustic clownish game,



A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

The ploughboy Eros, with his face of shame,  
His homespun coat, his sheep-hound at his  
side—

For *him* shall I forego my heaven of pride?  
Avaunt, thou son of mire!  
No Temple gave thee birth;  
Ether I am and fire.  
Queen of the spirit's immortalities,  
I rise as flame, I rise,  
And Pythoness aspire  
Above the reek of earth,  
Helmed with an angel's mirth,  
With star-dew on my beaming front and hair,  
Listening what music rare  
The planets make in sphering, with what word  
The morning star comes dripping back to God,  
Out of the sea at early dawn he trod:  
With what a clear and crystal evensong  
Recurrent Vesper surges back among

A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

The small pure rounded lights, which in the  
rain

Of radiance round him, pale and dumb  
remain.

Shall I, whose meteor beauty makes the plain  
Of the blue night mute with amazement, deign  
To lift a corner of an eye at Love?"

And who art thou, maiden or serpent-queen,  
Lamia, blaspheming him,  
The ineffable, the crown  
Of all things, in whose absence heaven is dim,  
Love, in whose presence utmost earth is  
green?

Who art thou, glorious Gorgon, who dost  
frown

And sneer upon his name,  
Cursing the holy one  
Whom no god signs with blame,

Whose imprecating prayer  
Mocks the sweet god of air?  
Thy origin is bitter thus to dare;  
Thy father haunts the gates of gloom and  
shame.

The trebly-coiled world-dragon in his lair  
Made thee a sorceress  
To bring the world distress,  
So venom-sweet, so execrably fair.  
He, that snake-emperor, thy sire, hath thee  
In dearest custody,  
Since wildest pæan shook the halls of night  
Around thee newly born.

‘This child is mine,’ the parent Python said,  
‘And made for my delight  
This baby star of Acherontian morn,  
This ray of darkness on the coast of dread.  
I seal her with a sign,  
I kiss her cradle with a kiss divine.

Lo, I will guide my daughter on her way ;  
She shall be lovelier than all Paradise,  
As a drop of God's own dew,  
As a fragment of a rainbow ; mysteries  
Which angels never knew  
Shall film within her eyes and chain the world.  
At her least tear shall kings  
Fling sceptres in the dust.  
If she sigh once, all things  
Shall gather ruth and rust.  
She shall seem pure, crystalline, virginal,  
A field of snow unmired,  
A lamb among new daisies marginal,—  
Time's daughter well desired.  
She shall seem purer than the vestal band  
Who feed the quenchless fire.  
Passion shall seem as dust upon her hand,  
Lust as the lute-string of a broken lyre.  
Lo, this is she, my perfect child demurest,

My cold delicious darling, purest  
Of all the woman-moulded spirit-births.'  
Scarce dares she breathe this atmosphere of  
earth,

Scarce dare her holy limbs caress  
Our passion-rooted flowers,  
For fear of soilure, scarce her maiden hours  
Dare gaze at Phœbus in his noonday stress.  
Thou art an Artemis, whose trembling beams  
Come nightly on some Alpine tarn, wherein  
Thy chaste low crescent fluttering almost  
seems

To shudder at itself, lest some deep wood,  
Neighbour'd too near the flood,  
Divulge Actæon, and the night grow rude  
With his hounds scenting blood.  
Thou wouldst as queenly frown  
The intruder dead,  
My Dian-Circe of the adder crown,

Vestal unvanquishèd,  
Thou, whose grey fatal eyes  
Seem to discern no wish  
Nearer than Death and some great Angel's  
wings  
Whose gaze with vast surmise  
And solitary yearning  
Searches the store-house of created things,  
And all the sleepy palaces of dreams,  
Whose domes are in the vast,  
Soon to its lady desolate returning,  
A dove-glance, with numb feet and weary  
wings,  
To tell her "I have past  
Hither and thither over time's grey sea,  
To the world's leaden bourn.  
Here there is nothing worthy, sweet, of thee  
And hungry I return."  
So shall her feigning gaze entrance the world,

A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

So shall the teeth of her strong gins snap in  
Men of great honour ; captains crisped and  
curled,  
Caged in the pleasant gardens of her sin,  
She shall entrap, demure in her disguise.  
No giggling wench, whose mincing passion  
snares  
Only the dogday drones and carrion flies,  
Which come at any carcase ; unawares  
The wise and the heroic in her hell  
Shall lie as broken ships.  
The saint shall sell his god, the hero sell  
His country for her lips.  
She shall confuse all law with her desire,  
Till by her hook she draw  
Religion, like some brute leviathan  
Snout-ringed with priestly gold,  
And hale him from the deeps which are his  
fold

To make her jest and play,  
To lick her sandal strings,  
To gambol in her royal way,  
To sleek her shrine with wealthy offerings ;  
While she, most exquisite, disdainfully  
Withholds her frost-feigned limbs and smiles  
a smile,

Like a proud music that draws men to die  
Madly upon the spears in martial ecstasy,  
A measure that sets heaven in all their veins  
And iron in their hands.

I hear the nations march  
Beneath her ensign as an eagle's wing ;  
O'er shield and sheeted targe  
The banners of my faith most gaily swing,  
Moving to victory with solemn noise,  
With worship and with conquest, and the  
voice  
Of myriads. Each man sees



Her eyes, each warrior hears  
The laughter of her joys,  
And stripped of reck or fears  
Moves graveward without sighs.  
That music lures him on,  
With a laughter of all things sweet,—  
The laugh of one that kisses well, the laugh  
Of a great king who mows his foes like chaff,  
The laugh of the feaster whose goblet is  
crowned,  
The laugh of the miser whose treasure is  
sound,  
The laugh of the lark when the morn sun  
breaks  
Its cloudy cover,  
The laugh of the dreaming girl who wakes  
And finds her lover ;  
All these triumphs in her marching  
Thou canst hear,—

A DAUGHTER OF CIRCE

As when the storm the mountain pines is  
searching,  
Tambour and clarion clanging ecstasy.  
Go forth, most fair Destruction, win the world  
For mine and me !

## APOLOGIA.

Why dost thou sing, poor bird of feeble song,  
While all the coppice rings with nightingales  
And the sweet thrush is vocal in the dales ?  
To these the glories of the spring belong.

Thy note is neither clear nor sweet nor strong :  
Be silent ; who will hear thy puny wails ?  
Thy throat is weak, thy cadence sorely fails ;  
Thou dost these more melodious songsters  
wrong.

Then the poor bird replied,—“The daisy holds  
Its right to summer with the lordliest tree,  
The spring was made as much for meanest me

APOLOGIA

As for thy queenly voice, which thrills the  
wolds,  
And random notes of mine may linger on  
To cheer the traveller after thou art gone."

Tabley, and as soon as he attempts to slight it as a thing of ashes his Muse takes her revenge by laying bare his insincerity. When he strikes a natural note of melancholy he is more himself, and he probably never wrote anything sweeter, or better worth remembering, than "The Dirge of Day."

This is the dirge of Day!  
She is gone her western way;  
The world sighs after her receding feet,  
Wood-echoes mock their beat.  
Thin leaves round dozing linnets gently shock.  
The languid bells along the sheep-cotes rock,  
Just rock, while their meek herds  
Move with them, as to words  
I seem to hear them say—  
Farewell, thou faded Day!

Thus shall we sing thee, Day,  
A fair lamenting lay,  
And spread pink-berried yew beside thy sleep  
And cypress, as we weep,  
That bough of mourning nourished on a grave,  
And, singing with sad breath our funeral stave,  
Say, let each forest thing,  
Whose note is sorrowing,  
Reed, wave, and rocking spray,  
Raise with us dirge o'er Day.

Lord de Tabley lived among a galaxy of poets, whose effulgence made him too diffident of his own powers. This feeling is somewhat pathetically expressed in the "Apologia," which closes this volume. Yet, with all his self-depreciation, he seems to have had a haunting belief that his work would not be quite forgotten.

And random notes of mine may linger on  
To cheer the traveller after thou art gone.

We also feel some assurance that much of what he has written will be preserved among the best of our literature. The poet of the many he will never be, but wherever delicacy of thought, felicity of phrase, harmony of line, and a sense of the inner magic of Nature find acceptance, his verse will grow in favour.

"Orpheus in Thrace and Other Poems." By the late John B. Leicester Warren, Lord de Tabley. London: Smith, Elder, and Co. Manchester: Sherratt and Hughes. 5s. net.

*Revenue*

PHILO

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of the estimates. million of the estimates. then work out at £142,000,000, or within half months. The total receipts for the year would £23,500,000 in the course of the next three ter of 1901, and may be expected to yield some tax produced £19,960,000 in the March quar- the tax on sugar. The property and income spring, which were made in anticipation of and Excise due to the large clearances in the be some apparent falling off in the Customs course of the next three months. There may that the estimates will be duly reached in the nearly £7,000,000, and there is little doubt to an extra 4d. in the pound) amounted to the additional receipts from income tax (due estimated for. In the March quarter of 1901 an increase of £0,880,000 on the year has been tax has only amounted to £3,240,000, whereas So far the increase in the property and income heavy on account of the extra 2d. in the pound. and this year the receipts will be unusually the income tax is paid in the March quarter, at the last possible moment. The bulk of naturally develop of paying their income tax in consequence of the habit which people observed at the end of December in any year, £142,455,000. A similar gap is always to be mated revenue for the financial year of which has so far been received and the esti seems to be a wide gap between the revenue increase of £11,581,965. At first sight there as in of nine months which has just ended shows an The first three quarters of that year, the period last year of a peace revenue. As compared with taxation, we must go back to 1899-1900, the growth, but more particularly to additional revenue, which has been due partly to natural of order to judge fairly the expansion in the of £17,000,000, or an increase of 12 per cent. whole,

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‘*Philocetes in Thrace, and other Poems.* By the late John Leicester Warren, Lord De Tabley. (Manchester, Sherratt & Holmes; London, Smith, Elder & Co.)

EVER since the death of Lord De Tabley, in 1895, his reputation as a poet has been steadily advancing. He had made his original appearance at a time when all production of verse, except that of Tennyson, was steadily discountenanced in England, and when even Browning and Matthew Arnold could scarcely hold what audience they had won in earlier years. But the recent revival of an interest in current verse, pushed in certain quarters to an absurd excess, has, at all events, had the good effect of recalling attention to, and insisting upon recognition for, elder poets who were most unjustly depreciated. Of these perhaps the most distinguished were Coventry Patmore and Lord De Tabley, of man is clothed by our anonymous poet in language of great beauty and power.”—LONDON REVIEW, *July 28th*, 1866.

“Every abatement, however, being made, ‘*Philocetes*’ is undoubtedly the work of a poetical mind, and may be read with enjoyment. With pains and matured art, the writer may produce what will endure.”—THE ATHENÆUM, *May 26th*, 1866.

“There is fine poetry in ‘*Philocetes*,’ but it is the song of despair.”—THE READER, *May 19th*, 1866.

“An unknown writer who chooses as the subject of a ‘metrical drama, after the antique,’ the sufferings and

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defines it as a reduction of "the Interior Life to a code of forty-five dreary theorems," all phrases, and subtleties and abstractions. Accused of error by Bossuet, De Noailles, and Godeau des Marais, exiled from Court, with scarce a friend save Cardinal de Bouillon, and dubiously supported by the Jesuits, Cambrai hung aside patriotism and appealed to the Pope: —

"Louis XIV. might not be to Rome the best loved of Most Christian Princes; Bossuet was still remembered by many as the author of a certain noxious Declaration of Gallican Rights, but not a few of their Eminences were *papabili*, and dared not mortally offend a Sovereign who carried the Triple Crown in his pocket."

As to "Innocent XII., he was an old man, and understood but little of the controversy, though that, said the Abbe Bossuet, did not matter, for he had great condence in the Holy Ghost."

Thus guided, he deferred a decision as long as possible, hoping to avoid giving one altogether. Moreover, it was difficult to limit mysticism without infringing the teaching of some of the recognized saints of the Church. Meanwhile Meaux and Cambrai, who had been as father and son, abjured decorum, used detectives and other underhand instruments, entered on a war of pamphlets, and slandered each other relentlessly. Taking for granted that Bossuet conscientiously believed "qu'il y allait de toute la religion," Lord St. Cyres, in company with M. Brunetiere, condones the lack of charity in "the frank, the open" old man, and ascribes all the insincerity to Fenelon, "whose organism was so delicate, so strained, that to him the common rules

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